

JOURNAL IQIO

now without petals; as soon as the seed begins to ripen,
the stem curves,
seems to bend under the weight of the carpels, and in a
solemn gesture,
having to let that seed fall without any device to propel
it in the air, at
least it carries it as far as possible away from its own
feet.

O Barres! How different from yours is the teaching
that I read in the
book of Nature! I wonder at the way each animal drives
its young from
it as soon as they are able to take care of themselves.
If a soil cannot
long continue to produce the same crop, this is not so
much because it
becomes poorer, but rather, according to a recently
discovered phe-
nomenon of exosmosis, because each plant distils
through its roots a poi-
son for the plant that resembles it. . . .

And moreover, however you explain it, the important
thing to note
is that the same soil cannot long continue to produce
the same crop.

19 June

Each summer I find again the volumes of Fabre that I
regret leaving
behind in the autumn. I was a "naturalist" before
being a writer, and
natural adventures have always taught me more than
those related in
novels. I even come to like the style of these books,
which at first re-
pelled me: what Fabre says in twenty pages could often
be put into ten
lines, but in this way one shares in the slow tempo of his
discoveries; he
seems to demand from the reader some of the patience
he needed for his
researches.

How delighted I am to learn today that the primary
larvae of the oil
beetles are those extraordinary and mysterious little
lice that I used to
watch rising up, clinging by the end of their prehensile
tail, on the ex-
treme end of the camomile disks when, as a child, I was
hunting beetles!
What a consolation to discover finally why I never
found any eggs in
the balls of dung that I used to take away from the
dung beetles!

I am unable to approve Fabre's jokes at the expense

of Darwinism;
not indeed because I feel myself to be a convinced
transformist (and
the reading of de Vries, far from persuading me, only
increases my re-
luctance), but daring to say that the Darwinian
doctrine rewards laziness is simply monstrous: "With the aid of a vague
phraseology that
juggles with the secret of the centuries and the
unknown elements of
existence, it is easy to build up a theory that shields our
laziness, for we
are repelled by painful studies whose ultimate result is
more often doubt
*Ti3n affirmation," Fabre writes. Yes, I subscribe to the
last words; but
if science risks a great deal by relying on the doctrine of
evolution, it is
certainly not through laziness that Darwin formulated
that doctrine.
The evil is not (or at least it was not in his time) the
doctrine; it is
rather relying on it today.

Here and there reflections of this kind are, as it were,
childish thrusts.